

Reflections on Faith and Life for Epiphany 2, 2021

Some time in the last couple of months I found a cartoon that shows a young man sitting on a park bench talking to Jesus. The man asks, “So why do you allow things like hate, famine, war, suffering, disease, crime, homelessness, despair, etc., to exist in our world?” Jesus replies, “Interesting that you should ask, because I was about to ask you the exact same question.”

One of the most important things we learned at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, S.C., was this: **WIGIAT**. It’s a question I’ve ask hundreds of times in my 21 years of ordained ministry. It’s a question that begs to be asked today, one week after the deadly insurrection at the U.S. Capitol last week.

Where is God in all this? We believe God was with the founding fathers of this “one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” Read the following historical words:

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity do ordain and establish this Constitution of the United States of America (Preamble).

WIGIAT? Where is God in all this? He’s in, with, and among us. The United States, like the biblical nation of Israel, hasn’t always lived by God’s gift of the Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 5), nor the other 603 statutes, laws, and ordinances (mostly found in Leviticus). But God’s chosen people didn’t do a very good job of obeying.

So God sent his prophets: Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and others. Their task was to call God’s people back to the faith of their fathers, to a life that was wholly governed by their religion: what and how they ate, when and how they prayed, what they wore, how far they walked on the sabbath, interpersonal and cross-cultural relationships, their government.

And when those chosen people continued to ignore and abandon God, in the fullness of time, he sent his own and only Son into the world, so that everyone who believed in him need not *perish*, but might have eternal life (John 3:16).

WIGIAT? Where is God in all this? Right where he’s always been: in the last, the least, the little, the lonely, the lost. God already sent Jesus—now there’s no one to send except those who strive to embody Jesus, to be his heart, his hands, his feet, his voice in our world today. ***“Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, you have done it unto me”*** (Matthew 25:40).

WIGIAT? Look in the mirror. Watch the news. Follow Jesus. ***“Go and do likewise”*** (Luke 10:47).